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ABSTRACT

An overview of past developments and trends which have had an impact on what is occurring at the present time in student personnel services for adults is presented. The intent was to establish some basis for current and future trends. The author contends that the development of student personnel services for adults in higher education has been extremely painful, erratic, and slow and that there now seems to be a major trend that these services be handled by specially trained personnel. Particular attention is given to the areas of admissions, financial aid, counseling, housing and food service and veterans affairs. (TA)

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PAST TRENDS IN STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES FOR ADULTS

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a general overview of past developments and trends in college student personnel services for adults. Particular attention is given to those trends and issues that have had impact on present practices within the field, with focus on such areas as admissions, financial aid, counseling, housing and food service and veterans affairs.

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PAST TRENDS IN STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES FOR ADULTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

This paper does not deal directly with the current trends and issues of student personnel services for adults. Rather, those past developments and trends that have had an impact on what is occurring in student personnel services for adults at the present time will be briefly presented so that some basis for current and future trends can be established.

Most professionals are aware of the fact that past literature concerning student personnel services for adult programs is quite limited. Yet, if one begins with the literature of the twenties and thirties--for mention is made occasionally of the guidance functions for adults during these periods--and carries through to the early sixties, there are certain trends that seem to warrant mention. To put these past developments and trends into some sort of perspective, it is difficult not to present a brief discussion of the total development of programs--both the academic and the student personnel services programs.

General Trends

The field of college student personnel administration has evolved over a relatively lengthy period of time and has presented many facets and phases to the student and to the university or college community. Generally speaking, this has depended upon the period of historical development, the philosophies of education that have held sway at a particular point in time, and the general climate of a particular institution.

As is true of so many parts of contemporary American higher education, some student personnel services originated in the early colonial colleges and persisted in the past century with little change in form. These, rather generally, included a concern for housing, discipline of students, student activities and certain relatively simple forms of counseling. In the earliest years of American higher education, most of the rudiments of what we have now come to recognize as student personnel functions were the responsibility of the college or university president himself. From time to time, as the president saw fit, some of these functions were delegated to other staff members. In total then, the development of student personnel work and the present level of attention given both to the total campus life and to the experiences of students has been largely an outgrowth of changes in American higher education. While today, many in higher education can accept E. G. Williamson's point of view that student personnel work refers both to a program of organized services for students and a point of view about these students, such was not always the case.¹ The development of student personnel work into a program of relevant functions and services with philosophical and theoretical underpinnings has, as Walter Johnson points out, been painful, erratic and slow.

If such has been true for student personnel services for the younger or so-called regular college students, it has been even more so for student personnel services for adults in higher education. While higher education gained a firm footing in America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, higher education for adults did not begin to gain a strong hold until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Brown and

¹Williamson, E.G. Student Personnel Services in Colleges and Universities, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1961.

Columbia Universities were among the first of the collegiate institutions in the United States to make some sort of systematic effort to provide educational opportunities for the general public apart from the regular students. But it was not until somewhat later that extension programs, continuing education programs, and adult education programs could be said to have stabilized. As A. A. Liveright has pointed out, William Rainey Harper, in his first pronouncements at the founding of the University of Chicago in 1892, asserted the importance of adult education to the University. The first class taught in the new University was an evening class, and the University opened its doors with the correspondence study department already in operation.

In the field of university extension, the "Wisconsin Idea" set an early and vigorous philosophy. A host of other colleges and universities, either in basic policy statements or in more recent statements by administrative officers, emphasized the responsibility of the college and university for continuing education--that is, plans for extending the knowledge and learning of the campus to the members of the community regardless of age.

A variety of forces since 1940 have influenced dramatic growth in all adult education activities in the United States and most certainly in the area of student personnel services as well. These include:²

1. The growth in total population and in life expectancy, which accounts for a vastly increasing number of adults who come to the market for adult education programs;
2. Continuing development in industrialization of living and in real income of all workers, which make it possible for adults to pay for programs in adult education;

²Liveright, A. A. Adult Education in Colleges and Universities, Chicago: Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1960, 50 pp.

3. A continuing improvement in the standard of living and in the real income of all workers, which make it possible for adults to pay for programs in adult education;
4. The impact of World War II and the Korean War in terms of bringing more adults to college campuses and thus emphasizing the importance of continuing education for the students and making colleges aware of the opportunity that can be provided for such students;
5. A major movement of our population from farm to city with accompanying needs for new kinds of adult education;
6. Large scale proliferation of the mass media with consequent possibilities for bringing in large and more imaginative educational programs into homes and living rooms for adults;
7. Vast increase in the numbers of voluntary organizations and in the educational programs carried;
8. More and more people in the United States accepting the need for a college education as part of their standard equipment for a job and for life. As a result, there have been staggering increases in the number of adults who now hold college degrees.

These trends have all had varying degrees of impact on the total picture of adult education. They have, to some degree, also had an impact on the total development and proliferation of student personnel services for adults. Yet, even with the tremendous rate of growth that has been experienced in adult education programs, student personnel programs for adults have been slow in coming and at times, quite narrow in scope.

Past Trends and Issues for Student Personnel Services

The purpose in presenting this brief overview of the development of student personnel services and the history of education for adults is to lay some ground work for perhaps a major past trend and issue in student personnel services for adults. That trend is simply this: that in approximately the last three decades, student personnel services for adults have become formalized, struggled and very slowly expanded in our institution of higher education. The fact that services were originally one of the many duties of administrators and other personnel dealing with adults and now are

handled, in many instances, by specialists specifically hired and trained to carry out these duties would seem to be a major trend.

As has been previously stated, a review of the literature pertaining to adult education and more specifically to student personnel services for adults in higher education reveals relatively little in the way of reported services during the period 1920 to 1945. Such work as Klein and Moffitt's Counseling Techniques in Adult Education, Martha Farmer's Student Personnel Services for Adults in Higher Education, Grotton's In Quest of Knowledge, and publications from such areas as the Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, the Adult Student Personnel Association, The ERIC Center for Adult Education and Commission XIII of ACPA do provide insights to past trends and issues in the area of student personnel services for adults. Yet, when compared to the voluminous reports for the total area of college student personnel services, relatively little has been reported on such services for adults.

One might conclude from the lack of reported material, that prior to the late forties and early fifties no such services existed. And, in many situations, that undoubtedly was true. Yet, the rudiments--some of the basic services--did exist and did function to the advantage of students and the programs involved.

What then transpired in the way of growth from this time? In a survey of 93 colleges some ten years ago (1959) conducted by Martha Farmer,³ only 53 percent of the institutions had fairly complete or partially complete student personnel programs and 18 percent had joint day-evening programs. These included some form of a special advisory staff on either a full or parttime basis, who had responsibilities for such things as academic--and, in some cases, placement--counseling, application for loans, scholarships, and other forms of financial aids together with the handling or referral of student's

³Farmer, Martha L. Student Personnel Services for Higher Education, Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1967, 211 pp.

personal and other problems. In addition, slightly less than two-thirds of the institutions studied reported that they had some form of student activities in operation. About half of these maintained student councils and newspapers, but others had some student activities including honorary professional and social groups as well as interest groups of one kind or another. However, at that same period of time, it is doubtful that one could have found any institution of higher education that did not provide the same services, and many others in addition, for their regular day students--and thus once again, pointing to what might be termed the "second class citizenship" of the adult evening student.

When one looks at the historical causation of such a slow development of student personnel services for adults, there have been several major supposed causes. One very real cause is that of finances. To develop and maintain a decent program of student personnel services costs a good deal of money. As the institutions who offered adult programs were already, in the minds of many administrators and board members, putting in an unjustifiably large amount of money into the educational programs, it had been the general feeling that no more such funds should be spent for "non-educationally related" services. This argument is still very much in vogue today, not only in programs for adults, but for all of student personnel services. Secondly, it was difficult to find services specifically for adults. While graduate programs in the field of student personnel have become much more common as of late, there are few, if any, that specifically offer a concentration in the adult area. Finally, there was a general belief that adult students did not desire and did not need such services. After all, the majority of adult students, as this line of thought goes, were only taking a few classes--that is they were only part-time students--and such areas as placement, testing, counseling, orientation, student activities, and all of the rest seemed, to many, to have little bearing on providing these students with the unlimited educational opportunities they

seem to desire.

It is therefore a source of amazement to some and of gratification to others that student personnel services for adults have developed over this period of time into a cognizant, on-growing and ongoing system which does not basically differ from those services offered to day students in either philosophy or type of service. The difference in today's programs for adults lies in the manner in which they are utilized and presented. Today it is recognized that the type or types of student personnel services offered should be determined by the needs of the particular school and the student body. Too often, as Elliott Palais has indicated, student personnel services have been the types of services traditionally associated with regular college student programs.⁴ Today, we recognize a great diversity of adult programs and also should recognize that while adults do have much in common with the regular aged college student they also have specialized desires and needs and that these are and should be met through a program of services.

This then, the development of a program of services for adults, seems to have been the major trend, and to some an issue, in the area of student personnel services for adults. There have, however, been other and at times more dramatic trends and issues within specific services. This paper will deal with a few of the many trends that have occurred in specific areas of student personnel services.

Trends and Issues in Specific Services

Counseling Services for Adults

It has been a commonly held notion that anyone can be a counselor. All one needed is an interest in people, a quiet office, and perhaps a course or two in basic counseling techniques. Many student personnel workers have taken

⁴Palais, Elliott in Farmer, op. cit.

to their bosom the E. G. Williamson statement that counseling is the generic basis of all student personnel work⁵ and have often wrongfully concluded that being such a worker implies counseling skills almost automatically. More recently, we have begun to realize that there are several levels or depths of counseling and that while some are able to function at all levels, most of us do have our limitations, both in skill and understanding and in time which precludes involvement in in-depth counseling.

Counseling, in one form or another, has been with student personnel services for adults for quite some time. In the early years, more often than not, the counselor was an individual with several other duties in addition to those of counseling adult students. Likely, he was the admissions officer or the registrar and may have handled financial aid--if there was any. Additionally, if he was given more than a portion of his time to do counseling work, he or she was very likely doing all types of counseling including personal, vocational-educational and coordinating a testing program.

Klein and Moffitt suggested in their 1945 edition of counseling techniques in adult education that counseling be divided into three major areas: educational, personal, and occupational. The individual approach--"a therapy approach" was stressed--and every individual in student personnel was considered to be "more or less a counselor." It was suggested that the scope of the counseling program include student enrollment and attendance, student data and records, student interviews, personal counseling and psychotherapy, vocational counseling and student body and group counseling.⁶

Certainly, not all counseling programs for adults were involved in such diverse services at that time. Congruently, not all programs today offer such a variety and some of the areas mentioned may not even belong to counseling services. And, as many of us are aware, counseling programs are influenced by

⁵Williamson, E. G.

⁶Klein, Paul E. and Moffitt, Ruth E. Counseling Techniques in Adult Education, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1946, 185 pp.

changes in trends and theories in their own areas as well as in student personnel services.

One trend in the area of counseling for adults has been the slow movement away from the non-professionally trained counselor to that of a trained professional. Part of the reason for such a change has been the changing attitudes of the American public towards counseling. Visiting a counselor, for more and more people, no longer implies a certainty of the stigma of mental illness. Then too, there has been a steady increase in the professional training programs for future counselors and an increasing support given to the area by the administration and board members. More recent trends in counseling include group counseling, marital problem counseling, and counseling for retirement, all of which have made their appearance relatively recently and are in various stages of emphasis and development.

Housing and Food Service

These areas for adult student programs have, once again, not received a great deal of attention in the past. Elliott Palais has pointed out in his excellent article entitled "What is Evening Student Personnel"? that the availability of these services to evening students under the heading of student personnel is questionable in as much as evening students primarily commute to college.⁷

Yet, even the commuting student becomes hungry, and at times, needs and deserves help in relocating a place of residence. Many evening student personnel programs, over the years, have developed various means to meet these particular needs of their students. Cafeterias have been created or their hours of operation extended, vending machines have been utilized and coffee and conversation areas opened. Information services or a clearing house concept of information concerning the availability of housing opportunities has also sprung up. Usually, this service consists of maintaining up to date listings of rental

⁷Palais, Elliott, Farmer, op. cit.

opportunities and of those students desiring housing.

In the final analysis, it may not be practical to have these services considered as a separate evening student personnel responsibility. Rather they should be considered, perhaps, as a part of the institution's regular services. The important point--as it always has been--is that such services be available to the evening student if he desires them.

Married student housing is another area that has developed rapidly over the past three decades. At one time, very few, if any efforts were put forth in this direction--usually based on the premise that either there weren't many married college students or that college students really shouldn't get married. Following World War II, with the great influx of veterans and older students, some institutions began to make efforts to provide some sort of housing to this "special group." Initially, these often consisted of quonset huts or makeshift barracks. Trailer courts made an occasional appearance as did the conversion of some of the older dormitories into married student housing units.

Recently many institutions have made real efforts to provide more modern and adequate housing arrangements for these ever increasing numbers of married students and their families. Apartments for married students, close-in trailer parks and with the extension of modular housing, inexpensive college owned duplexes and the so-called "town house" concept have all sprung up. Interestingly enough these recent developments may have even more far reaching effects on the housing concepts for the regular college student. From all indications the large residence hall concept is on the wane and in its place housing facilities similar to those now being made available to married students will be the thing of the future for all college students who desire or need college provided housing.

Veterans Affairs

There are few institutions of higher education today that have not had at least one individual who has been given responsibilities for dealing with veterans. Traditionally, this service has included management of various federal programs involved with veterans--which as most of us recall involves an horrendous amount of paper work--and offering various types of counseling and advice to these individuals in their readjustment to college life. Since most professionals are familiar with the general development of veterans affairs and of the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Education program, time will not be spent reviewing their history.

The March 8, 1971 edition of The Chronicle of Higher Education stated "with a million servicemen expected to be discharged from the armed forces this year, and an estimated 4 million Vietnam era veterans already discharged, veterans once again are appearing on college campuses in increasing numbers." While the numbers of veterans are certainly increasing on most campuses, there is a fairly recent, and apparently conflicting trend in the area of veterans affairs, developing. With the West Coast schools in particular, the area of veterans affairs and advising has become much more a financial aid center and less of a counseling-advising office. On many campuses the area of veterans affairs has actually been incorporated into the office of financial aids and those programs are directly administered by that office. No longer is there a distinct office referred to as the Veterans Office and no longer does it appear that veterans have a specific individual to whom they can relate. While certainly this may have some positive administrative aspects, there does not seem to have been a great reduction in the need for the availability for such a program which is distinctly geared to veterans and such a move can be viewed by many as a negative approach to providing services for a specific segment of the student population.

Financial Aid Services for Adults

As a total program, the area of financial aids for college students in general has grown tremendously over the last several years. Many government programs have come into being to subsidize, and, at times, play a major role in the financial aid package for the individual college student. Professionals in the area of financial aid have projected that the future will hold even more complete financial aid programs for college students.

This, has not, however, been the entire case for the adult student in higher education. If one looks over the past several years, there is no conclusion to be reached save that the adult student is not in the same enviable position as the regular college student. Full-time adult students, in general, have available most, if not all, of the financial aid programs that are available to the younger college student. This, of course, depends upon the financial aid program that exists at a particular institution and the administrative policies that also may exist.

Part-time adult students, however, have continued to face real problems in the area of financial aid. By law, part-time students have not, in the past, been able to utilize such major programs as workstudy or Educational Opportunity Grants. While National Defense Loans have been available to half-time adult students, many schools have not been willing to totally provide this type of financial aid. Some types of scholarships, whether they be state or private, have been available to adult students too. However, these have been in limited numbers and usually have a large set of requirements for an individual who wishes to apply. Short term loans, through a private bank, have been made available as well but these are not as plentiful as once believed.

The trend then, for financial aid for adult students, has, as in so many other areas of student personnel for adults, been considerably slower in coming. To say that there now exists an adequate source and system for these individuals in the area of financial aid would be an overstatement by any standard.

Admissions Policies and Procedures

Finally, a few comments towards the area of admissions policies and procedures seen in order. Such policies and procedures have been almost as varied as the numbers of institutions involved. However, with the so-called regular college student, most institutions of higher education have had certain things in common. These include that the student must meet certain minimum requirements in the way of past education; that he must have been in a certain percentile ranking within his graduating high school class; or that he must have certain scores on admission tests in order to be considered for a particular institution. Transfer students wishing to be admitted to regular college programs, at times, face even more of a complicated system. Transcript evaluation, judgments as to past adequate work, and other areas often enter into the final decision. As a college student becomes more of a transient individual, these difficulties become more and more magnified.

Admissions to adult programs have always had some points of difference from the admission of regular college students. Adult programs have, and rightfully so, prided themselves on what has been termed an "open door policy" for many of its students. Evening admission requirements and procedures tend to differ from the day sessions in that they are less stringent and easier to operate. A 1961 survey conducted by the Association of University and Evening Colleges⁸ reported that 50 percent of their member institutions who responded noted the following differences between day and evening admissions:

1. The omission of college board examinations for evening students.
2. Day students must have been from the top half of their high school class.
3. Personal references required of day students but not of evening students.
4. Health examinations required of day students but not of evening students.

⁸ Farmer, op. cit.

5. Formal matriculation required of all day students.

This trend in less stringent requirements for adult students has its roots in the very beginnings of such programs. Even as far back as the turn of the century, it was understood that the programs must not only be designed to meet the needs of a special group of individuals but also to encourage and attract them to attend. It was also recognized, and still is, that the effects of maturity and experience cannot be directly measured in terms of past performance or test scores. Motivation and desires for continuing an education or improving skills have and must play a major role in the admission of all students to any program.

Even with the ever increasing diversity of programs now available, most experts in the field agree that it is extremely important to continue this non-qualifying, open door policy to any student that desires, or is able to take advantage of such programs.

Summary

Broadly speaking then the past trends and issues in student personnel services for adults have, to some degree, been dwarfed by other happenings in the field of education for adults. Trends and developments in the field have existed but they have faced many problems and have been slow in maturing.

What has been presented in this paper has only touched on some of the highlights of these past trends in student personnel programs for adults. While being overly brief in many areas, and excluding others entirely, it is hoped that some basic background has been laid for an understanding of present and future trends.

It is important not to dwell overly long on the past. Certainly, what has transpired in years past is interesting and has had a good deal of influence on what is happening today. Congruently, what is transpiring today, and the plans

that are being laid for tomorrow, will have profound effects on the total picture of student personnel services for adults. And it is there we should expend our major efforts.

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